# North Korea successfully tests a new high-speed torpedo that uses AI to detect and precisely hit targets

Defence · 18 October 2026 · https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/current-affairs-english/2026/10/18




## News

North Korea's state news agency KCNA reported on 17 Oct 2026 that the country had tested a new 'high-speed precision-guided torpedo' system underwater on Thursday, 15 Oct 2026. Target detection and guidance are handled by artificial intelligence (AI); KCNA said the test verified propulsion technology developed through more than 180 tests over five years and called it 'a significant step in the country's naval development'. Earlier, on 14 Oct, two types of submarine-launched 'strategic cruise missiles' were tested – the first publicly reported submarine-launched cruise-missile test since January 2024.

## Key facts

| | |
|---|---|
| **Test** | High-speed precision-guided torpedo – 15 Oct 2026; KCNA report 17 Oct |
| **AI role** | Target detection and guidance |
| **Propulsion** | 180+ tests over 5 years; improved propulsion efficiency verified |
| **Related tests** | 14 Oct – 2 types of submarine-launched strategic cruise missiles (eastern waters); 3 Oct – hypersonic intermediate-range missile test |
| **Leader / capital** | Kim Jong Un; Pyongyang |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Headline note** | Not an 'underwater bomb' – a torpedo; nor the 2023 'Haeil' nuclear underwater drone |

## Background

- History: after World War II, Korea was divided in 1945 along the 38th parallel – Soviet north, US south. The Korean War lasted from 25 June 1950 to 27 July 1953; the armistice was signed at Panmunjom (no peace treaty); a Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) separates the two. India chaired the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission for prisoners of war (Gen. K.S. Thimayya).
- Nuclear: North Korea announced withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT, 1968/1970) in January 2003 – the only country to do so; its first nuclear test was in Oct 2006. UN Security Council sanctions continue. In 2023 it also claimed tests of 'Haeil', a nuclear-capable underwater drone.
- Science: a torpedo is a self-propelled underwater weapon. Underwater targets are found with SONAR (Sound Navigation And Ranging) – ultrasonic waves are sent out and distance is worked out from the time the echo takes to return; bats and dolphins use the same echolocation. Sound is used because radio waves fade quickly in water. India's heavyweight torpedo is 'Varunastra' – DRDO's NSTL, Visakhapatnam.

**Tamil Nadu link:** no direct link. Related TN fact: the naval station 'INS Kattabomman' (1990) at Vijayanarayanam, Tirunelveli district, is a Very Low Frequency (VLF) transmitting station used to communicate with submerged submarines.


### Shanmugam IAS Academy – your next step

- **Courses:** TNPSC Group 1, 2 / 2A (Prelims + Mains), Group 4, UPSC / IAS – Coimbatore · Madurai · Online – https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/fees
- **Books (PDF):** TNPSC PYQ books, UPSC books – https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/study-materials
- **Free quiz + daily PDFs:** https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/free-pdf-download · All news of this day: https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/current-affairs-english/2026/10/18

**Admissions – call / WhatsApp: 99941 46662 · 99944 27714 · www.shanmugamiasacademy.in**